

**In the Claims:**

The claims are as follows:

1. (Original) A method for characterizing a service provider, comprising the acts of:
  - a) gathering information on characteristics of a service provider;
  - b) analyzing the information to provide an outcome;
  - c) generating a report responsive to the outcome; and
  - d) providing the report to at least two clients of the service provider; wherein the acts of analyzing, generating, and providing are performed by a management service.
2. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the service provider is an ASP.
3. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the service provider is an ISP.
4. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the act of providing comprises the act of selling the report.
5. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the report comprises hard copy.
6. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the report comprises soft copy.
7. (Original) A method for a management service to advise a client of an application service

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provider regarding the performance of the application service provider, comprising the acts of:

- a) gathering information on performance of an application service provider;
- b) analyzing the information to provide an outcome;
- c) generating a report responsive to the outcome; and

d) providing the report to at least two clients of the application service provider; wherein the acts of analyzing, generating, and providing are performed by a management service.

8. (Original) The method of claim 7, wherein the act of providing comprises the act of selling the report.

9. (Original) The method of claim 7, wherein the report comprises hard copy.

10. (Original) The method of claim 7, wherein the report comprises soft copy.

11. (Original) A method for a management service to advise a client of an application service provider regarding the security of the application service provider, comprising the acts of:

- a) gathering information on security of an application service provider;
- b) analyzing the information to provide an outcome;
- c) generating a report responsive to the outcome; and

d) providing the report to at least two clients of the application service provider; wherein the acts of analyzing, generating, and providing are performed by a management service.

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12. (Original) The method of claim 11, wherein the act of providing comprises the act of selling the report.

13. (Original) The method of claim 11, wherein the report comprises hard copy.

14. (Original) The method of claim 11, wherein the report comprises soft copy.

15. (Original) A method for a management service to advise a client of an application service provider regarding the availability of the application service provider, comprising the acts of:

a) gathering information on availability of an application service provider;

b) analyzing the information to provide an outcome;

c) generating a report responsive to the outcome; and

d) providing the report to at least two clients of the application service provider; wherein the acts of analyzing, generating, and providing are performed by a management service.

16. (Original) The method of claim 15, wherein the step of providing comprises the act of selling the report.

17. (Original) The method of claim 15, wherein the report comprises hard copy.

18. (Original) The method of claim 15, wherein the report comprises soft copy.

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19. (Original) A method for a management service to advise a client of an Internet service provider regarding the performance of the Internet service provider, comprising the acts of:

a) gathering information on performance of an Internet service provider;

b) analyzing the information to provide an outcome;

c) generating a report responsive to the outcome; and

d) providing the report to at least two clients of the Internet service provider; wherein the acts of analyzing, generating, and providing are performed by a management service.

20. (Original) The method of claim 19, wherein the act of providing comprises the act of selling the report.

21. (Original) The method of claim 19, wherein the report comprises hard copy.

22. (Original) The method of claim 19, wherein the report comprises soft copy.

23. (Original) A method for a management service to advise a client of an Internet service provider regarding the security of the Internet service provider, comprising the acts of:

a) gathering information on security of an Internet service provider;

b) analyzing the information to provide an outcome;

c) generating a report responsive to the outcome; and

d) providing the report to at least two clients of the Internet service provider; wherein the acts of analyzing, generating, and providing are performed by a management service.

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24. (Original) The method of claim 23, wherein the act of providing comprises the act of selling the report.

25. (Original) The method of claim 23, wherein the report comprises hard copy.

26. (Original) The method of claim 23, wherein the report comprises soft copy.

27. (Original) A method for a management service to advise a client of an Internet service

provider regarding the availability of the Internet service provider, comprising the acts of:

a) gathering information on availability of an Internet service provider;

b) analyzing the information to provide an outcome;

c) generating a report responsive to the outcome; and

d) providing the report to at least two clients of the Internet service provider; wherein the

acts of analyzing, generating, and providing are performed by a management service.

28. (Original) The method of claim 27, wherein the step of providing comprises the act of selling the report.

29. (Original) The method of claim 27, wherein the report comprises hard copy.

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30. (Original) The method of claim 27, wherein the report comprises soft copy.
31. (Previously presented) The method of claim 7, wherein the information on performance of the application service provider includes information about responsiveness of the application service provider.
32. (Previously presented) The method of claim 31, wherein the information about responsiveness of the application service provider is characterized statistically by a mean value and a probability density function or cumulative distribution function that describe a time between receipt by the application service provider of an incoming request to the application service provider and an outgoing response from the application service provider.
33. (Previously presented) The method of claim 11, wherein the information on security concerns a vulnerability of the service provider to attacks by unauthorized parties seeking to steal information from the service provider or to vandalize the service provider.
34. (Previously presented) The method of claim 33, wherein the information on security is characterized statistically by a count or other measure of said attacks that result in adverse consequences to the service provider or in adverse consequences to one or more clients or in adverse consequences to a member of a user population over a given period of time.
35. (Previously presented) The method of claim 15, wherein the information on availability of the

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application service provider concerns a susceptibility of the service provider to failure.

36. (Previously presented) The method of claim 35, wherein said failure is measured by minutes-of-time-per-month when the service provider is unable to respond within a predetermined interval to an incoming request from a client or from a member of a user population.

37. (Previously presented) The method of claim 19, wherein the information on performance of the application service provider includes information about responsiveness of the application service provider.

38. (Previously presented) The method of claim 37, wherein the information about responsiveness of the application service provider is characterized statistically by a mean value and a probability density function or cumulative distribution function that describe a time between receipt by the application service provider of an incoming request to the application service provider and an outgoing response from the application service provider.

39. (Previously presented) The method of claim 23, wherein the information on security concerns a vulnerability of the service provider to attacks by unauthorized parties seeking to steal information from the service provider or to vandalize the service provider.

40. (Previously presented) The method of claim 39, wherein the information on security is

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characterized statistically by a count or other measure of said attacks that result in adverse consequences to the service provider or in adverse consequences to one or more clients or in adverse consequences to a member of a user population over a given period of time.

41. (Previously presented) The method of claim 27, wherein the information on availability of the application service provider concerns a susceptibility of the service provider to failure.

42. (Previously presented) The method of claim 41, wherein said failure is measured by minutes-of-time-per-month when the service provider is unable to respond within a predetermined interval to an incoming request from a client or from a member of a user population.

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